

***Protest Music As Responsible Citizenship* was a special event that studied how music helps to construct the political consciousness of a nation, how songs mobilize thousands of people around issues affecting American life, and how music addresses the role of America in the global context.**

The event brought together Harry Belafonte, Holly Near, Bernice Johnson Reagon, and Pete Seeger, four musicians who have played key public roles in the past decades, to discuss how citizenship, music, and social change take on greater significance in this time of increasing polarization both at home and globally. Music and social change have been documented through autobiographies and biographies of performers, ethnographic studies of music and cultural performance, and ethnomusicology research on music and revolution. However, little has been documented about the role of public music performances in shaping citizen responses to political events.

The musicians participating in the event and conversation--Harry Belafonte, Holly Near, Bernice Johnson Reagon, and Pete Seeger--have challenged the public to consider issues of national security and responsible citizenship. Through their songs, stories, and actions, these musicians have enacted their citizenship by voicing a challenging call. ***Protest Music as Responsible Citizenship*** explored how protest music and protest itself can be considered responsible citizenship.

The event, which was moderated by James Early of the Smithsonian and Mershon's Amy Horowitz, included a roundtable that brought together artists and a variety of scholars from Ohio State to discuss the complexities of protest music and other political art in a complicated global society. The event also included an evening performance for the public, where the artists performed songs and discussed their own political and performing histories. The entire two-day event was videotaped for documentary production.